



The continuing attraction of Village Districts is that, more than any other form of government, they represent the essence of local control.

The Association was formed to provide understanding about the Village District form of government with the New Hampshire State Legislature, the parent municipality and even to residents in the Village Districts themselves.

The New Hampshire Association of Village Districts was formed in December of 2000 to address some of these issues. It was registered with the State of New Hampshire in 2001.

The major purposes of this Association as laid out in the bylaws of the organization are as follows:

1. Promote the public's understanding of the Village District form of government in New Hampshire.
2. Act as a resource to facilitate communications and the exchange of information among Village Districts within the State.
3. Promote legislation of general benefit to Village Districts.
4. Provide programs and training which will aid in the management of Village Districts.
5. Foster relationships for positive interaction and the sharing of resources with other governmental entities.



Communications

The NHAVD is based in Concord. The Executive Board meets regularly throughout the year. It has established communications with the State Legislature and the numerous State Departments that affect Village Districts.

The Association has a web page accessible through nhprimex.com

To get on the email list for meeting schedules and announcements, contact tmahon@nhprimex.com



New Hampshire Association of Village Districts

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Village Districts in New Hampshire



Answers to frequently asked questions about the role, structure and governmental purposes of Village Districts.



New Hampshire Association of Village Districts

What are Village Districts?

Village Districts or precincts constitute a specialized form of municipal government. They are limited purpose governmental units that have the same authority and powers that towns have with respect to the purposes for which they were formed.

Why are they formed?

The purposes for which Village Districts can be formed are laid out in RSA 52.

1. Extinguishing fires;
2. Lighting or sprinkling of trees;
3. The planting and care of shade and ornamental trees;
4. Water supply and protection for domestic and fire purposes;
5. Construction and maintenance of sidewalks, main drains and common sewers;
6. Construction, operation and maintenance of sewage and waste treatment plants;
7. Construction, maintenance and care of parks or commons;
8. Maintenance of activities for recreational promotion;
9. Construction or purchase and maintenance of a municipal lighting plant;
10. Control of pollen, insects and pests;
11. Impoundment of water (dams);
12. Appointment and employment of watchmen and police;
13. Layout, acceptance, construction and maintenance of roads;
14. Maintenance of ambulance services

RSA 52 is an evolving statute and several purposes now included were not part of the original statute. Control of pollen and insects was added in 1957, sewage and waste treatment plants in 1961, dams and roads in 1975 and ambulance services in 1977.

Village Districts hold annual meetings, elect officers and approve budgets, appropriations and resolutions in the same way that towns do.

Residents within some districts may pay an extra property tax to finance their operation. Some districts, particularly water districts, may be self supporting in that the expenses of running the district are covered entirely by charges for the services provided. These districts do not need to raise taxes.

How are they formed?

Village Districts are formed by petition to the Board of Selectmen or governing body of the parent municipality, of 10 or more legal voters residing within the proposed district. The petition defines the physical boundaries that will encompass the District and the purposes for which it is being formed. The voters establish the district by vote, name it and elect officers to run it.

Who are they?

In size, Village Districts range from a single street to dozens of square miles. In scope, they run the gamut from major water and waste water treatment facilities and fire departments, to maintenance of street lights and beaches. Annual budgets range from a few hundred dollars to several million.

Where are they?

There are approximately 90 Village Districts in the State of New Hampshire and they are

scattered throughout the State. Some districts have been in existence for more than a hundred years. One new district has been formed in each of the last three years.

Legislative Issues

Initial surveys to determine the need for an Association of Village Districts clearly indicated legislative issues as the top priority. Because Village Districts are not widely understood, legislation is frequently passed without an assessment of the impact on Village Districts.

One of the more important purposes of the Association is to ensure the best interests of the Village Districts are preserved through the myriad of legislative changes that New Hampshire enacts each year. The Executive Board monitors proposed legislation that is likely to impact Village Districts. Association members have testified at numerous legislative hearings. There are also a number of existing laws that need to be changed to benefit Village Districts. These range from the eligibility of Village Districts for Highway Block Grants, tax payment procedures from the parent municipality, capital reserve fund management, voter checklists and zoning issues.

Financial Management

It is in everyone's best interest, particularly the District taxpayers, that all Village Districts be well managed. With GASB 34 likely to impact all Districts in a major way, the NHAVD is working with the New Hampshire Government Finance Officer's Association and the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration to develop management and budgeting training programs.